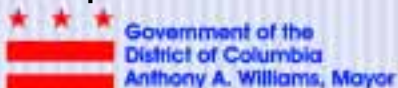


NURSE

Regulation **E**ducation **P**ractice



DC Department of Health



Dr. Gregg A. Pane, Director Of DC DOH
RN/APRN Licensure Renewal

CONTINUING ED: Opportunity For Professional Growth

DISTRICT of COLUMBIA NURSE

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Circulation includes over 22,000 licensed nurses and student nurses in the District of Columbia

Feel free to email your "Letters to the Editor" for our quarterly column: IN THE KNOW: Your opinion on the issues, and our answers to your questions. Email your letters to our Executive Director Karen Scipio-Skinner at karen.skinner@dc.gov. (Lengthy letters may be excerpted.)

**TO ENSURE THAT YOU RECEIVE YOUR
RENEWAL MAILER ON TIME, REMEMBER:
YOUR ADDRESS UPDATES ARE CRUCIAL**

Failure to Report Change of Address will result in \$100 Fine

Recently moved or planning to move? Please let us know if you have a change of mailing address. We must know within 30 days of your move.

The health professional licensing boards have experienced difficulty in accessing licensees/applicants due to changes in address. Licenses have been sent and re-sent. And disciplinary notices have been mailed—but not received—by health professionals.

This becomes particularly problematic when our investigators are unable to serve subpoenas due to an address change. This is a major public safety concern when the health professional is of immediate danger to the public and we are unable to locate them to advise them to cease practice.

According to 17 DCMR 3601.3(b), "failure to notify the board of any changes of address of the place or residence or place of business or employment within 30 days after the change of address" (D.C. Code 3-1205.13(b)) is a Class 4 infraction punishable by a \$100 fine for the first offense and higher fines for subsequent offenses.

NURSES PLEASE NOTE

It is imperative that we have your current name and mailing address. Please provide us with this information. Fill in the form below and mail it to:
**Board of Nursing, HPLA, Suite 600, 717 14th Street, NW, Washington DC
20005. Or fax it to: (202) 727-8471.**

(Please be assured that your address will NOT be posted on our website.)

**FAILURE TO NOTIFY THE BOARD WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THE
CHANGE OF ADDRESS IS PUNISHABLE BY A \$100 FINE FOR THE
FIRST OFFENSE AND HIGHER FINES FOR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES.**

On all changes, please provide the following:

SS #

LICENSE #

NAME

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP

SIGNATURE: (MUST BE SIGNED)

Message from the Director



Dr. Gregg A. Pane, Director Of DC DOH



Dear Colleague:

I appreciate the opportunity to recognize and support the vital work nurses do in the District of Columbia.

I am truly grateful for the work the Board of Nursing does to support and enhance the role of nurses and the nursing profession in improving the lives and health of District of Columbia patients and communities. I am deeply appreciative of the invaluable role that each and every nurse plays in the District of Columbia health system; without nurses we simply could not continue to further our mission of raising the health status of District residents and visitors to the highest level possible.

The mission of the Department of Health is to assure equitable access to comprehensive, high quality public health services to all District of Columbia residents and visitors and undertake activities that will support the highest quality of life achievable for District residents and visitors. To achieve this goal, DOH provides health assessment, assurance, promotion and treatment, emergency response services, and leadership in the establishment of health policy and the implementation of health reform.

Although we face great challenges, the health landscape of the District of Columbia is changing for the better, and the work of our nurses is critical to our continued success. ■

Sincerely,

Gregg A. Pane, MD, MPA

Director

District of Columbia Department of Health

BOARD OF NURSING 2006 MEETING SCHEDULE

January 4, 2006

February 1, 2006

March 1, 2006

April 5, 2006

May 3, 2006

June 7, 2006

July 5, 2006

August—No Meeting

September 6, 2006

October 4, 2006

November 1, 2006

December 6, 2006

Board meetings are open to the public at 1:00 p.m. ***(Please note this time change.)***

Location: 717-14th Street, NW; 10th Floor Board Room; Washington, DC 20005

Transportation: Closest Metro stops - Metro Center (take 13th Street Exit); McPherson Square (take 14th Street Exit)

If you plan to attend please call (202) 724-8800 to confirm meeting date and time.

Corrections

In the last issue of *DC NURSE: REP*, the following institution was inadvertently omitted from the "Hospital Directory" list on page 24:

THE NATIONAL REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

102 Irving Street, NW, Washington, DC 20010 • Phone: 202-877-1000 • Website: www.nrhrehab.org

We apologize for this omission.

In the last issue of *DC NURSE: REP*, we incorrectly attributed the article entitled "A Life Changing Experience," excerpted from an article by Pam McVey, Chief Nursing Officer at Biloxi Regional Medical Center, Biloxi, Mississippi, to Sandra B. Marshall. This article was written by Ms. McVey, and shared by Ms. Marshall with other CNOs.

Message from the Chairperson

Continuing Education: *Opportunity To Strengthen Your Practice*

The major focus of this edition of *DC NURSE: REP* is RN/APRN licensure renewal. As you are aware, continuing education will be required this renewal period. By June 30, 2006 you should have completed a minimum of 24 contact hours. At that time you will be required to, upon written request from the Board of Nursing (BON), to show evidence of having completed 24 contact hours in continuing education.

"Which courses do I need to take?"

When selecting your continuing education courses, be deliberate. The courses you take should be relevant to your practice and should facilitate your professional development. Assess your strengths and weaknesses. Ask yourself:

- What knowledge or skills do I need to enhance my assessed learning needs?
- What courses could help make me a better practitioner, educator, researcher, administrator, policy analyst, etc.?
- How has my practice area changed? Am I aware of those changes? If not, what additional education do I need?
- Am I ahead of the curve? Should I be publishing or offering continuing education courses to share my knowledge with others?

"Why is CE now required?"

Assuring ongoing or continued competence is a current and future challenge for all BONs. Like most professional boards, nursing boards have relied on continuing education seminars and courses, work-based and/or orientation programs and refresher programs as evidence of continued competence. In the near future, BONs and the nursing profession will be asked to provide evidence-based data that the assumption that these efforts translate into competence in practice is a sound assumption. Nevertheless, it is a legal and ethical obligation that we must meet. We will meet it through some tried-and-true methods and activities and some newly creative ones.

Many organizations, consumer groups and individuals are reflecting on the issue of nurse competency. The five most obvious entities include nurses, nurse educators, employers of nurses, the profession of nursing and boards of nursing, but the BON has the unique responsibility of assuring nurse competency for the purposes of protecting the public health, welfare and safety through regulation of nursing practice and education.

Establishing nurse competency through initial licensure and re-licensure are fairly visible and well-known BON activities, but Exstrom (2001) identifies some of the less obvious functions that are taken by BONs to assure ongoing competency, such as (a) "communicating standards to consumers, nurses, nurse educators, employers, and other regulators"; (b) "engaging in collaborative activities with nurses, educators, employers, nurs-



"Let us not consider ourselves as finished nurses. We must be learning all of our lives."

—Florence Nightingale

ing organizations, and consumers"; (c) "identifying a variety of techniques nurses employ to demonstrate competence"; (d) "holding individual nurses accountable for continued competence"; (e) "disciplining nurses who fail to meet standards of safe and effective care"; and (g) "establishing non-disciplinary models to monitor or limit the practice of nurses who demonstrate the inability to perform essential nursing role functions" (p. 121-122).

Our Legal and Ethical Obligation

Our paths to meet these challenges are not always clear, but we will meet the challenges to uphold ongoing

and continued competency in practice because we have a legal and ethical obligation to do so. Three excerpts from the ANA Code make this clear:

- The nurse acts to safeguard the client and the public when health care and safety are affected by the incompetence, unethical, or illegal practice of any person.
- The nurse assumes responsibility and accountability for individual nursing judgments and actions.
- The nurse maintains competence in nursing.

The BON recognizes both the legal and ethical obligations of professional nursing to uphold standards of practice. Law requires nurses to meet the minimum standards of practice. Ethics holds professional nurses to a skill level that promotes quality.

Hallmark of a Professional

Wherever you find yourself professionally—needing to learn or needing to share what you have learned—these activities encompass continuing education; continuing professional growth as a nurse.

It has been particularly exciting for us, the DC BON, to hear from nurses—to hear what courses you have decided

to take, and what you all have learned thus far. The willingness to continue to grow in your profession is the true hallmark of a professional.

Continuing education should not be viewed as a burden placed on health professionals; it should be viewed as an expectation, privilege and opportunity to grow as a professional. It is your obligation to yourself and your patients to stay current in your profession. ■

"Knowledge cannot be inherited or bequeathed. Knowledge rapidly becomes obsolete, so it has to be acquired anew by every individual."

—Drucker, 2002

References

- Exstrom, S. M. (2001). *The state board of nursing and its role in continued competency. The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing* 32 (3) 118-125.
- Ludwick, R. (1999). *Ethical thoughtfulness and Nursing Competency. Online Journal of Issues in Nursing. Available at bbt://www.nursingworld.org/ojin/ethical/ethics_2.htm.*